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RETURNEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS
AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-eighth year

Letter dated 16 November 1993 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

It is with grave concern that I inform you of the emergency humanitarian situation in my country.

The plight of the refugees in the Azerbaijani Republic is worsening. A severe winter is expected to lead to great hardships, and, unless drastic action is taken, it will threaten the lives of the thousands of people who are fleeing the recent Armenian offensives.

Already snow has fallen throughout the country and temperatures have reached the freezing point. The early arrival of winter will have particularly catastrophic consequences for thousands of refugees from the territories occupied by Armenia who are living in tents set up in refugee camps in the districts of Imishli, Beylagan and Agjabedi. The freezing weather will inevitably lead to the spread of chronic diseases and will expose the children and elderly to frostbite.

The refugee crisis is also creating problems that affect everyday life in the whole of the country. For most Azeri students the academic year has not started yet because school buildings are being used to provide shelter for the homeless. Institutes of higher education have also been affected; classes have been cancelled and auditoriums have been filled with folding beds for the refugees.

It is also increasingly difficult to maintain the heating and electricity supplies in the country. While electricity is now regularly cut off in Baku, it is feared that central heating will be in short supply in the coming year. These shortages will exacerbate complications resulting from the influx of refugees and will render authorities in Azerbaijan even more helpless to deal with the crisis.

I would be grateful if you could have the present letter urgently circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 113, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Yashar T. ALIYEV
Counsellor
Chargé d'affaires a.i.